

OPEN SPACE PUBLIC COMMENT:

We would like to begin by saying that we are open space advocates. We recently became aware of issues regarding the acquisition of open space and SRA criteria.

First, we feel that this issue is sufficiently important that just having public meetings and opening a forum for the public to comment is not good enough. Very large sums of money are involved in acquiring these lands and many complex issues are involved regarding their preservation, use, etc. It is too big a responsibility to be left to one group (DNREC) and a legislative committee. All Delawareans and even visitors from other states and countries are impacted. The entire process has been carried on apparently among a small group of people. It should not be a private club. Rather, there should be outreach to multiple groups.

For open space that will be used for recreation, some of the following organizations need to be encouraged to involve their membership:

Bicyclist - <http://www.trailspinners.org/> Equestrians - <http://delawareequinecouncil.org/> Hikers - <http://www.wilmingtontrailclub.org/>
Bird watchers - <http://www.delawareaudubon.org/>

The above list is in no means comprehensive. There are groups involved in fish and wildlife, flying radio-controlled model airplanes, kayaking, boating, etc.

Where land is adjacent to areas like White Clay Creek State Park and Brandywine Creek State Park, Friends groups need to be asked to participate.

Notices should be posted on these organizations' websites and every effort made to bring these groups to the table to discuss acquisition and use of the space.

For areas that face environmental and wildlife concerns, experts from academic settings and experts with special knowledge need to be allowed to assist in the decision-making process.

For areas where historic and cultural needs exist, experts to be found to make sure that all parties are represented.

Each year we hear more and more about a shortage of funds in municipal government to do all that needs to be done. It is vitally important that we spend wisely so that the needs of the majority will be met.